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Monday, March 7, 2016 www.metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

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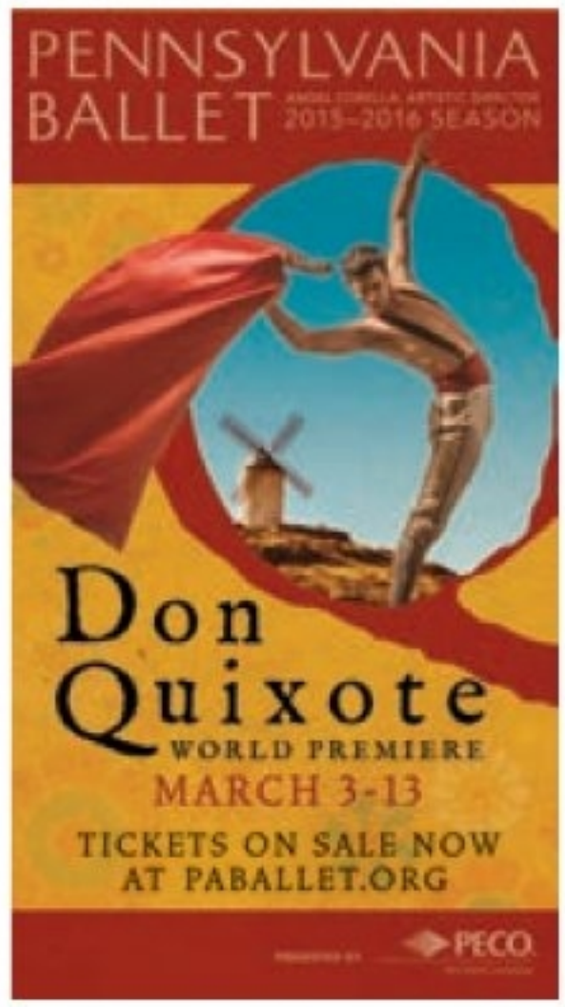

GOODBYE, NANCY

Iconic wife of President Ronald Reagan dies at 94. Obama: 'She redefined the role of first lady.' 10

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3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

RUSSIA WILL CUT DEFENSE BUDGET BY 5 PERCENT

GETTY IMAGES

Russia's defense budget will be cut by 5 percent in 2016, Russian Deputy Defense Minister Tatiana Shevtsova said, according to the RIA news agency. Defense spending has been growing as part of a drive by President Vladimir Putin to restore Russia's military might. The decision to cut shows, however, that even the armed forces are not immune to a slowing Russian economy, which has been hit by falling oil prices and Western sanctions. The 5 percent cut, if approved by Putin, would be the biggest reduction in defense spending since he took office in 2000. In 2011, while prime minister, he announced plans to revitalize the Russian army and its aging equipment by spending 23 trillion rubles by 2020. Military interventions in Ukraine and Syria have made strengthening the military an even greater priority for the Kremlin. The cut represents a victory for the finance ministry, which has said Russia can no longer afford the multi-billion-dollar revamp of the armed forces and called for a 10 percent spending reduction across ministries. REUTERS

US NATIONAL GUARD MAY JOIN CYBER OFFENSE AGAINST ISLAMIC STATE

Defense Secretary Ash Carter said the National Guard's cyber squadrons will play an increasingly important role in assessing the vulnerabilities of U.S. industrial infrastructure and could be asked to join the fight against Islamic State. The National Guard — a reserve military force that resides in the states but can be mobilized for national needs — is a key part of the military's larger effort to set up over 120 cyber squadrons to respond to cyber attacks and prevent them. One such unit, the 262nd squadron, is a 101-person team that includes employees of Microsoft Corp. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google. The unit is "famous throughout the country" for several high-profile vulnerability assessments, Carter said at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington. REUTERS

RANSOMWARE CAMPAIGN

Apple Inc. customers were targeted by hackers over the weekend in the first campaign against Macintosh computers using a pernicious type of software known as ransomware, researchers with Palo Alto Networks Inc. told Reuters on Sunday. Ransomware, one of the fastest-growing types of cyber threats, encrypts data on infected machines, then typically asks users to pay ransoms in hard-to-trace digital currencies to get an electronic key so they can retrieve their data. Security experts estimate that ransoms total hundreds of millions of dollars a year from such cyber criminals, who typically target users of Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system. REUTERS

Is an early start to spring in our forecast? GETTY IMAGES

WEATHER WATCH: CAN WE START SINGING 'PUT AWAY THE SHOVELS, THE SNOW IS OVER'?

I'm going to date myself here and go back in time to "Monday Night Football," when Dandy Don Meredith would start singing "Turn out the lights, the party's over" when we all knew the verdict was in on the outcome of the game.

Well, can we start singing "Put away the shovels, the snow is over"?

I would say yes, with one caveat: March is notorious for surprises, but from all the signals I see the chances of a significant snowstorm of 4 inches or more are minimal at best.

With that being said, there is one week in March that will merit some watching.

Bolaris' Weather Watch

During March 23-28, the arctic oscillation will dip slightly negative, which is an indicator of colder temps, and at the same time models have been consistent with developing a storm system that would move in from the Southern Plains and perhaps spread a wintry mix.

The best chance of accumulating snow or ice would be across the higher elevations and the mountains, but not along the I-95 corridor.

And a departing storm on or about Monday, March 14, could leave a wet accumulation across interior sections of New England. If anything changes, my readers will be the first to know.

However, as of now, get ready for a big dose of spring fever this week. After a beautiful Monday with temperatures climbing well into the 50s, the midweek period will see readings bloom into the 70s across much of the Northeast with the exception of coastal locations.

New York City should hit the 70-degree mark on Wednesday, however, Boston will fall shy of 70. Unseasonably warm temperatures will remain right through Thursday until rain and cooler temps arrive by week's end.

BONUS OUTLOOK: St. Patrick's Day, as of now, looks dry for Philly, New York and Boston with the lucky thermometer dancing in the 60s for most areas.

I will continue to watch it closely, and if anything changes you can always catch my latest thinking on Twitter @weathersavior.

Philadelphia weather outlook

You will be feeling energized this week as temperatures soar into the 70s.

After a marvelous Monday with temperatures closing in on 60 degrees, get ready for the thermometer to hit spring-like levels.

Tuesday: Plenty of sun and 72.

Wednesday: A spring blast arrives as warm southwest winds send temperatures into the mid-70s.

Thursday: Late-day or evening showers, still windy and unseasonably warm with a high of 73.

Friday: An early morning shower, then clearing with a high of 61.

Saint Patrick's Day long-range outlook: Windy, dry and mild with highs around 60 to 65.

Will Irish eyes be smiling on a warm St. Patrick's Day? GETTY IMAGES

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Wrongful death claims are brought against a person who has caused someone's death either negligently or intentionally. Wrongful death claims allow the estate of the deceased person to sue the party who is responsible. The suit is usually filed by a representative of the estate, on behalf of surviving family members. A survival claim is brought by the estate for the damages the deceased person would be entitled if they had lived, such as the pain the deceased suffered from the time of negligence through death.

Wrongful death and survival claims can occur in a variety of situations, including medical malpractice and accidents. If a doctor or other health care provider was careless, and death resulted, an action can be brought. Car accident fatalities involving negligence can be wrongful death, if a victim dies as a result of injuries caused by another driver's carelessness. These are just a few examples of personal injury cases that are wrongful death/survival claims. A wrongful death/survival claim can stem from almost any kind of personal injury situation resulting in death.

Spouses, children, and other dependents may suffer from financial loss and emotional stress caused by the wrongful death of a loved one. Family members often can recover for a wrongful death from the harm left behind by an accidental death.

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Tony Luke's restaurant in South Philadelphia is often packed with hungry customers. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

What's the beef?

Infighting over the naming rights of Philly's famous Tony Luke's brand has resulted in a legal battle between father and two sons.

JENNY DEHUFF
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In a tale as bitter as broccoli rabe, a feud has broken out across social media and in the courts between family members behind Philadelphia's famous Tony Luke's sandwich brand.

Infighting between Anthony Lucidonio Sr. (Tony Luke Sr.) and his sons Anthony Lucidonio Jr. (Tony Luke Jr.) and Nicky Lucidonio has resulted in the filing of a lawsuit that pits father and one son against another son.

The crux of the dispute is over the future of the Tony Luke's brand and its 22 franchises, which now span the mid-Atlantic region and beyond.

In order to compete with other cheesesteak variations served on corners across South Philadelphia, the elder Lucidonio took the famed Philly sandwich and gave it a new spin, adding Italian roast pork and chicken cutlets to the menu and adopting the slogan, "The Real Taste of South Philly."

In 1992, Lucidonio, along with his two sons, founded Tony Luke's at Front Street and Oregon Avenue.

In 2007, Lucidonio Jr. teamed up with Ray Rastelli Jr. to acquire and own all the rights to the name and brand Tony Luke's.

The company flourished, but this past summer there was a falling out between Lucidonio Sr. and Lucidonio Jr., according to the father's attorney, Steve Angstreich, who is also representing Nicky Lucidonio.

In July, Lucidonio senior fired Lucidonio junior, according to court documents, and told his son he would no longer provide the sautéed vegetables and pork au jus to the franchises that Lucidonio Jr. had been running for the last eight years.

"Anthony Jr. said on the record he was fired and unceremoniously let go from the store," said Angstreich. "The fact of the matter is that he didn't work there and he was being paid by his father, but wasn't working. So, his father decided the time for payments would stop."

According to a lawsuit filed last week by Lucidonio Jr., Lucidonio Sr. and brother Nicky were the beneficiaries of millions of dollars thanks to Lucidonio Jr. being the face and spokesman for the brand "without putting up a penny."

In return for the net royalties and other benefits the franchises provided, Lucidonio Jr. only asked that the flagship South Philadelphia location remain open, as a franchise. But the father wanted to rename the restaurant "Papa Luke's."

Lucidonio Jr. claims "we've gotten rich off the publicity they've achieved through franchising. We say we've been successful 15 years before there was a thought of franchising," said Angstreich.

As the brand grew and additional franchises opened, money flowed in, and Tony Luke's became a household name.

"Indeed, consumers now identify [Tony Luke Jr.] with the brand exclusively, much to the chagrin of his father," language in the civil complaint reads.

Rich Gallucci, Lucidonio Jr.'s lawyer, said "we cannot understand why Tony Luke Sr. is having any issue of making more money," he said.

Gallucci insists Lucidonio Sr. hasn't paid any license fees and has made millions more from his South Philly store alone thanks to his son and the franchising endeavors.

"His son and his franchise partner have made his father a millionaire, but they have not yet received the same financial benefits," said Gallucci.

Last week, Lucidonio Jr. took to Facebook to express his regret over the family's legal battle, saying "I am in shock of the allegations that have been made, especially as I am, and will remain, one of the owner's of Tony Luke's Front & Oregon. I ensure you that your experience at our Tony Luke's locations will remain as consistent as it always has. I am saddened by the recent events that have taken place and have done everything I can to build the reputation of the Tony Luke's name and family from a local legacy to a national one."

Asked if there could be any future between father and son, Angstreich said, "I doubt there will be a relationship. That's the problem with family fights. It's very difficult to undo what you say and feelings get hurt."

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Close to a hundred people showed up for the opening of the new Le Cat Café. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Philly's first-ever cat café has a 'purr-fect' opening day

Le Cat Café on West Girard Avenue in Brewerytown attracted massive crowds on its opening day.

SAM NEWHOUSE
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sam.newhouse@metro.us

Ever wanted to pet a kitten while sipping your coffee? Now you can, at Philly's first-ever "cat café."

More than 150 eager cat-lovers flocked to the grand opening of "Le Cat Café" on West Girard Avenue in Brewerytown from across Philly and even New Jersey for just that experience on Sunday. Guests enjoyed coffees while meeting cats who are available for adoption.

"Without cats, I'm only one-fourth of myself," said Caroline Graybill, 21, a senior airman stationed at McGuire Air Force Base in Burlington County. She grew up with cats but isn't allowed to have one in the barracks, she said. "It's just nice being able to come and pet cats," she said.

Le Cat Café is an all-volunteer operation that grew out of Green Street Rescue, a cat rescue charity based in the Fairmount area that rescues cats and adopts them out from locations such as the window of nearby Fairmount Pet Shoppe. In 2016 alone, the rescue has saved 80 cats and adopted out 40.

Now, they have an entire café of their own to introduce cats to potential owners while they play on custom-made cat trees and toys and hunt around tables while guests sip coffees.

"I'm hopeful for the cats," said Kathy Jordan, the founder of Green Street Rescue and Le Cat Café, who said she cooked up the idea after hearing about similar spots opening in San Francisco and New York. The concept has already existed in Japan for years.

Since then, Jordan has been actively looking for a storefront where the idea would work. She recently found it on Brewerytown's rapidly developing West Girard Avenue.

"It's the new adoption platform for cats," Jordan said. "If you take a cat and put them in a café-type setting, they're in a much more natural environment. ... They're sitting in your lap, they're playing with a toy. You have a better idea of that cat's personality."

Like Green Street Rescue, Le Cat Café's mission is to adopt out cats to its customers, who for a $12 fee can lounge around meeting cats while enjoying a coffee from the K-cup machine. All fees go toward keeping the lights on at Le Cat Café.

"We live from hand to paw," said Jordan, who plans to begin offering yoga classes with cats next week and will also rent out the space for special events.

"Cats are kind of my whole world," said the café's manager, Kimberly Kearly, who had on a pair of cat ears for the grand opening. "I love all animals. ... Based on my experience, my friend said, 'You would be the perfect manager for this café.'"

Jordan said the café's mission is 100 percent focused on adopting out homeless cats.

"The more that are adopted, the more room there is to rescue others, and the more that are rescued, the less that are outside suffering," she said. "It's a win-win-win-win."

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BRIEFS

Two shootings reported within one hour in Philadelphia

Two men were shot within an hour of each other in broad daylight Sunday, police said.

The shootings occurred around 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. on opposite sides of Philly. Both victims survived.

The first shooting occurred near 63rd Street and Landsdowne Avenue when a 31-year-old man was shot once in the shoulder, police said.

The victim was transported to Lankenau Hospital by a private vehicle and listed in stable condition. No arrests were reported.

The second shooting was on the 2900 block of Mascher Street in Kensington.

The victim, a 20 year-old-male, was shot once in the left foot around 1:21 p.m., police said.

The victim was transported to Temple University Hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. No weapon was recovered and no arrests were reported.

Police are asking anyone with information about these crimes to contact 911 or 215-686-TIPS (8477). Members of the public may also text tips to PPD TIP (773847). SAM NEWHOUSE

Drinking and driving allegedly led to three accidents. ISTOCK

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Police: Cops, Uber driver, kids struck in separate DUIs over weekend

Three incidents over the weekend reportedly involved drivers under the influence — one hit police cars, and another hit an Uber driver.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

In three separate car accidents over the weekend, two police officers, an Uber driver and two young girls were struck, but all the victims are reportedly in stable condition.

According to police, the officers were injured when a driver under the influence crashed into their police car in West Philly early Sunday.

The crash happened around 4:30 a.m. when a 58-year-old man driving a 2001 Lincoln Navigator crashed into three police officers inside two police vehicles that were parked next to each other at Chestnut and South 52nd streets.

The driver hit one car with two officers inside, pushing it into the other, which had one officer.

Both police cars sustained heavy damage. The three police officers, a 46-year-old male and 27-year-old male who were in one car, and a 45-year-old female in the other, were treated at Presbyterian Hospital for complaints of pain, police said, but no serious injuries were listed.

The driver, who has not been identified, will be charged with DUI, police said. Around the same time, an Uber driver was struck by a DUI driver, NBC reported.

The driver reportedly was passing a tractor trailer near Academy and Woodhaven roads while trying to access a highway on-ramp, then struck an Uber driver. The Uber driver was reportedly not inured. The DUI driver was not identified but is expected to face charges.

These crashes came a day after another driver hit a crowd of pedestrians around 5:45 p.m. on the 3400 block of Jasper Street.

Three pedestrians, a 45-year-old woman, an 11-year-old girl and a 15-year-old girl were all struck in the crash Saturday afternoon. The women were transported to Hahnemann Hospital for treatment and were all listed in stable condition.

The driver, 50, was arrested on suspicion of DUI, police said.

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BBB

Former first lady Nancy Reagan dies at age 94

The cause of death was congestive heart failure, said a spokeswoman for the Reagan Presidential Library. She died at her Los Angeles home.

Nancy Reagan throws the first pitch alongside kids from a "Just Say No" club at Game 1 of the 1988 World Series in Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium. GETTY IMAGES

Nancy Reagan, the former actress who was fiercely protective of husband Ronald Reagan through a Hollywood career, eight years in the White House, an assassination attempt and her husband's Alzheimer's disease, died on Sunday at age 94.

"She is once again with the man she loved," her stepson Michael Reagan wrote on Twitter.

Reagan became one of the most influential first ladies in history during her Republican husband's presidency from 1981 to 1989.

Her husband, who affectionately called her "Mommy" while she called him "Ronnie," died in 2004 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's, the progressive brain disorder that destroys memory.

As news of Nancy Reagan's death spread, tributes poured in from Washington to Hollywood.

President Barack Obama, a Democrat, and first lady Michelle Obama said Nancy Reagan redefined the role of first lady.

"Nancy Reagan once wrote that nothing could prepare you for living in the White House," the Obamas wrote in a joint statement on Sunday. "She was right, of course. But we had a head start, because we were fortunate to benefit from her proud example, and her warm and generous advice."

Former first lady Barbara Bush said she and her husband, former President George H.W. Bush, who was vice president under Reagan, took comfort in knowing Nancy Reagan would be reunited with her husband, the late president.

The Hollywood glitterati weighed in on social media, many of them grieving the passing of an icon they remembered having grown up in the Reagan era.

"I sat near #Nancy Reagan once and felt like a teenager seeing one of my idols. She was a BOSS," wrote actress Elizabeth Banks of "The Hunger Games" fame.

Republican candidates for the 2016 presidential nomination, from businessman Donald Trump to Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, also conveyed their sympathies. The ghost of Ronald Reagan, who remains deeply popular among Republican voters, has hovered over the campaign as in previous years, with party candidates vying to claim the mantle of Reagan's legacy.

A Republican debate in September took place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, with an Air Force One jet providing a memorable backdrop.

Nancy Reagan will be buried next to her husband at that library. The public would have a chance to pay their respects prior to the funeral service, with details to come shortly.

Nancy Davis was a Hollywood actress during the 1940s and 1950s and married Reagan, a prominent film actor, in 1952. She then served as first lady of California during her husband's stint as California's governor from 1967 to 1975 before moving into the White House after his decisive victory over incumbent Democratic President Jimmy Carter in 1980.

Her most publicized project as first lady was the "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign. After her husband developed Alzheimer's disease, she became an advocate for discovering a cure. REUTERS

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RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

BATTLE SCARS

After a wild weekend of voting and debating, the ranks of presidential hopefuls have been bloodied if not yet quite bowed. Don't count on anyone dropping out this week, but some of the campaigners are staggering badly. That leads my three things to watch this week in politics.

1. ELIMINATION ROUNDS: Ted Cruz is crowing about his weekend wins as well he might. His victories came after a generally strong week that seems to have cemented him as the chief challenger to Donald Trump. The front-runner, meanwhile, is bragging about his wins too ... and trying to rebound from the losses. But what about Marco Rubio and John Kasich? Michigan, Mississippi, Hawaii and Idaho are coming up Tuesday for the GOP, and if those two trailing candidates don't somehow produce stronger numbers the drumbeat will grow considerably louder for them to give it up and go home.

TOM FOREMAN
Opinion
CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the new book "My Year of Running Dangerously."

Ted Cruz

2. RUNAWAY TRAIN: For the Dems, Hillary Clinton's delegate lead keeps growing. Bernie Sanders is still hanging in there, but he also must do much better when the Dems vote this week. Mississippi is unlikely to help him. His real target: Michigan. If he does well there, watch the bounce come back into his step at least a little bit. If not? She starts looking a lot more like a train pulling out of the station that he can't catch no matter how hard he runs.

3. PICKING SIDES: As the race tightens, so does the scramble to pick sides — especially for the GOP. Last week a series of broadsides were fired at Trump by members of his own party, and after this weekend's vote you can watch for the attacks to keep coming. It is not clear that they've really done any damage to the New York billionaire, but the establishment Repubs are watching his delegates mount and getting desperate to stop him.

BRIEF

Trump, Cruz angling for one-on-one Republican race

The Republican front-runner, billionaire Donald Trump, and Sen. Ted Cruz were angling for a two-man race for the party's presidential nomination on Sunday after evenly splitting four state nominating contests.

The wins for Trump and Cruz were a setback for party leaders, who have largely opposed Trump and hinted they prefer Marco Rubio, who took third or fourth in Saturday's four Republican contests.

"I think it's time that he dropped out of the race," Trump said of Rubio late on Saturday. "I want Ted one-on-one."

Cruz has been predicting a two-man race with Trump for several weeks.

On Sunday, Rubio was projected to win in Puerto Rico, his second victory to date in nominating contests across U.S. states and territories. CNN said that with a quarter of the votes counted, Rubio had secured nearly 75 percent of the vote.

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Florida woman faces charges after crashing in Daytona racetrack infield

A Florida woman faces drunken driving and other charges after plowing through the infield at the Daytona International Speedway and injuring four people, police said.

Abbie Kinney, 43, of Cocoa Beach, Florida, remained in jail on Sunday after she crashed her Toyota pickup into four people and six motor homes and vehicles in track's infield, where race fans were camping, early Saturday, according to a report by the Daytona Beach Police Department.

She told officers she had drunk three beers and "shouldn't have been driving," the report said.

Kinney was found at the wheel of her vehicle after the crash, which happened shortly after 2 a.m., the report said. A breath test showed her blood-alcohol content at more than twice the legal limit for driving, the report said.

She faces charges of driving under the influence as well as alcohol-related injury of persons and property.

The crash happened in the Lake Lloyd area of the infield, a popular spot for pre-race camping by fans.

The racetrack was host to motorsports events over the weekend, including the Daytona Supercross by Honda, according to the track website.

The famed track hosted the Daytona 500 race on Feb. 21.

REUTERS

Daytona International Speedway GETTY IMAGES

BRIEF

U.S. builds two air bases in Kurdish-controlled north Syria: Kurdish report

The United States has nearly finished setting up an air base in Kurdish-controlled northern Syria and was proceeding with the construction of a second base for dual military and civilian use, a Kurdish website said on Sunday.

A spokesman for U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said, however, the United States was not taking control of any airfields in Syria.

The Erbil-based news website BasNews, quoting a military source in the Kurdish-backed Syria Democratic Forces (SDF), said most of the work on a runway in the oil town of Rmeilan in Hasaka was complete while a new air base southeast of Kobani, straddling the Turkish border, was being constructed.

The source in the U.S.-backed alliance that also includes Arab armed groups told the news portal scores of U.S. experts and technicians were involved in the project.

Syrian Kurdish officials had recently said the Rmeilan airstrip was being used by U.S. military helicopters for logistics and deliveries. REUTERS

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Study shows how Zika could cause fetal brain defects

While the review does not give proof of cause, it does show where the virus might be inflicting damage in utero.

The Zika virus is capable of quickly infecting and harming developing fetal brain cells, scientists said on Friday in a study that provides insight into how the virus might cause the birth defect microcephaly in fetuses exposed in the womb.

The researchers said their study, published in the journal Cell Stem Cell, does not provide proof of a direct causal link between Zika and microcephaly, but it does identify where the virus may be inflicting the most damage in developing fetuses.

The mosquito-borne virus infects a kind of neural stem cell that goes on to form the cerebral cortex, the brain's outer layer responsible for intellectual capabilities and higher mental functions, the study showed.

Researchers found that these cells, exposed to the virus in laboratory dishes, were infected within three days, turned into "virus factories" for viral replication and died more quickly than normal.

"Our study shows once the virus gets to the brain it can reach these very important cells," researcher Hengli Tang, the study's lead author from Florida State University, said in an interview.

Tang said the study suggests the virus would be capable of doing the damage seen in microcephaly, a condition defined by unusually small heads that can result in developmental problems.

Zika has been linked to numerous cases of microcephaly in Brazil and is spreading rapidly in Latin America and Caribbean nations, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a global public health emergency.

Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus actually causes microcephaly. Brazil said it has confirmed more than 640 cases of microcephaly, and considers most of

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View of a poster against the Aedes aegypti mosquito on the door of seven months pregnant Maribel Gomez's house in Cali, Colombia. GETTY IMAGES

them to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. Brazil is investigating more than 4,200 additional suspected cases of microcephaly.

"By determining whether Zika virus infects cells in the brain and what happens to a cell that is infected, this paper begins to tackle questions surrounding how a virus that had previously been known to cause a mild illness could be linked to microcephaly," Amelia Pinto, a St. Louis University expert on viruses transmitted by arthropods such as mosquitoes and ticks, said in a statement.

Tang said more studies will be needed to prove whether or not Zika causes microcephaly.

"We know people would be interested in knowing this information, but a lot still needs to be done," Tang said. "Ultimately the proof would need to come from the clinical side and animal studies."

The researchers are currently growing in the laboratory what they called "mini-brains" composed of the stem cells to see how the virus may affect development over a longer period of time.

Traces of Zika virus have been found in the bodily fluids and tissue of mothers and babies affected by microcephaly. REUTERS

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Lena Dunham hospitalized

Lena Dunham has certainly had better weekends. The "Girls" creator was hospitalized for a ruptured ovarian cyst, a condition that required surgery, her reps confirm in a statement. "Lena Dunham has been very public with her personal bouts with endometriosis. This morning, she suffered from an ovarian cyst rupture and has been taken to the hospital," her rep said Saturday. "Lena will be undergoing surgery at an undisclosed hospital. We thank you for your understanding and hope that Lena's privacy will be respected." Here's hoping Dunham — who has been sitting out press activity for the new season of "Girls" due to her condition — has a speedy recovery.

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Nina Simone's daughter defends Zoe Saldana

Zoe Saldana faced a ton of backlash last week when the trailer debuted for "Nina," her long-delayed Nina Simone biopic, and a good deal of it came straight from the Twitter account for the estate of Simone, with pointed messages like, "Please take Nina's name out your mouth. For the rest of your life," or the simple posting of a video of Simone singing "Go to Hell." Many assumed it was Simone's daughter, Simone Kelly, behind the tweets, but she swears she didn't write them, as she doesn't run that Twitter account — and she feels bad for Saldana. "It's unfortunate that Zoe Saldana is being attacked so viciously when she is someone who is part of a larger picture," Kelly tells Time magazine. "It's clear she brought her best to this project, but unfortunately she's being attacked when she's not responsible for any of the writing or the lies." Kelly is still not down with the film, though. Upon watching the trailer, she "didn't feel much of anything except for poor Zoe," she says. "This is not how you want your loved ones remembered."

Leslie Jones ain't afraid of no Twitter users

So that new "Ghostbusters" trailer that came out last week? That some people apparently had some problems with? Well, one of the new team members, Leslie Jones, has heard those complaints — specifically about her MTA worker character being the only nonwhite one also not a brainy scientist — and she's got something to say about them. "Why can't a regular person be a ghostbuster? I'm confused. And why can't I be the one who plays them? I am a performer. Just go see the movie," she tweeted. "It's not a man, woman, race, class thang! It's a ghostbuster thang! And as far as I'm concerned we all ghostbusters! Stand tall!" Yes, ma'am!

@rickygervais
The fact that there are warnings like "Do not drink" on bottles of bleach makes me realise that Donald Trump can become president.

@AZEALIABANKS
Ive got great legs and great hosiery but i need help with socks. lol

@UncleRUSH
After speaking to Bernie Sanders I have decided that he is overstating what he can deliver to underserved communities

@RuPaul
Drag Queens are like the marines of the LGBT movement. They suit up, they show up, and they're always ready to serve

DAILY VIDEO

YOUTUBE

Voters for Trump ad satirical gold

To really help Donald Trump get his message out there, the folks at "Saturday Night Live" have created this spot-on ad from the made-up PAC Racists for Trump. The nice, hard-working "real Americans" in the ad just want a leader who tells it like it is, who's good at business and isn't part of the Washington establishment. But when the camera pulls back a bit on each one, there's something else about them and their support for Trump they're not saying. It would all be such an effective take-down if "SNL" hadn't had Trump himself on as host barely three months ago. That's awkward.

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Miranda Kerr fine with Katy Perry

Don't worry, folks, Miranda Kerr is totally down with Orlando Bloom and Katy Perry dating. Kerr, who shares a son, Flynn, with ex Bloom, apparently has nothing but nice things to say about Ms. Perry, whom Kerr thinks is "a really cool woman and talented singer," a source tells E! News. "She has not had an opportunity to spend time with Katy," but Perry "seems to be really good with Flynn and that is important to her. He seems very happy every time he comes back from Orlando. She has no anger towards Orlando for dating Katy." So they've got that going for them, at least. As for how the whole co-parenting exes thing is working out? "Orlando and Kerr communicate well about their son's well-being," the source adds.

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‘The perfect ballet for everyone’

Pennsylvania Ballet members in rehearsal. ALL PHOTOS ALEXANDER IZILIAEV

Pennsylvania Ballet’s Angel Corella kicks off his “dream season” with “Don Quixote.”

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Soloist Oksana Maslova

Dancer Ana Calderon

Growing up in Madrid, Angel Corella was just one of countless students subjected to reading “Don Quixote” at a young, uninterested age.

“It’s almost trauma for all the kids because it’s such a long book,” Corella, now the Pennsylvania Ballet’s artistic director, recalled last week during a break from rehearsals.

“The teacher would read aloud and then call on someone to continue, so you had to be following the reading or he’d give you a zero. So it was very stressful, and it’s a novel that most of us know by heart. If you ask any Spaniard, I’m sure that they’ll be able to recite the beginning of ‘Don Quixote.’”

Choreographer Marius Petipa’s ballet adaptation has long since eclipsed the Cervantes novel in Corella’s experience. He’s performed the piece countless times as principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre and as a guest artist with elite ballet companies around the world. Now he brings “Don Quixote” to the Pennsylvania Ballet for the first time in a new adaptation that he hopes will bring the flavor of his native Spain to Philly audiences.

“Most of the ballet’s productions are beautiful, but they focus a lot on the dancing,” Corella said. “I wanted to spend time on the costumes and sets to transport everyone that comes to see the ballet, so that when the curtain goes up they actually feel like they’re in a town in Spain. The color of the stones, the color of the costumes, the light that is very different in Spain — I wanted to make sure that it looked as authentic as possible.”

To realize that ambition, Corella spent the summer in Barcelona, riding his Vespa to old shops where he purchased shawls, fans, castanets and headpieces that have become an integral part of the production.

While Corella made his debut as artistic director during the 2014-15 season, this year is the first he programmed completely in his new position. He used the opportunity to plan what he calls his “dream season,” with “Don Quixote” both a nod to his heritage and a show that he hopes will appeal to a wide-ranging audience.

“It’s a fun story, a comedy, but at the same time there’s a lot of virtuoso dancing. It’s a story about how love conquers all with a lot of great music. It’s actually a better ballet for kids than ‘The Nutcracker.’ It’s the perfect ballet for everyone.”

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Feel liberated with 'Simply Laura' star Laura Vitale

"This season we pulled out all the stops," she says of the upcoming episodes.

JAMIE PRIMEAU
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Head to Metro.us for Laura Vitale's recipe for broccoli rabe, sausage and pesto pasta. PROVIDED

At age 12, Laura Vitale moved to the U.S. from Italy, and although she's found a home away from home in South Jersey, she stays connected to her roots through food. "I didn't realize how much [cooking] fed my soul until I moved away and I missed it," she recalls.

She was so homesick that she'd cry over the phone to her nonna, who eventually got fed up with the complaints and suggested Vitale try cooking their family recipes for herself. So that's exactly what she did. "Just the smell of those dishes cooking made me feel better," she says. "It instantly made me feel connected."

Vitale's love of food inspired her to start her YouTube series "Laura in the Kitchen" in 2010. Since then, she's acquired millions of viewers and now stars on Cooking Channel's "Simply Laura," which airs on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

She may not be a trained chef, but her philosophy is relatable. "I like to cook because of how it makes me feel," she explains. "I don't cook to impress. I cook to feed my soul. I don't think I'll ever be able to stop."

What to expect this season

The first season of "Simply Laura" was more of an introduction, bringing her cooking style from YouTube to TV. As for season two, Vitale says, "This season we pulled out all the stops. It's still so much heart. You're going to get to see so many of my friends and family."

In the season premiere, Vitale cooks up a restaurant-style meal for a date night in with her husband. The recipes include New York strip steaks, green beans with herbed butter, crispy ribollita and amaretto tiramisu.

"I want to reach those people who are perhaps feeling like they're stuck in a rut when it comes to getting that passion to get back in the kitchen," she explains. "If I can do it, anybody can do it. When you watch that show, you'll instantly feel like you're part of my family."

Dream dinner party

If Vitale could invite any three people — living or dead — over for a dinner party, she'd choose an eclectic group. First is Nonna, whom she dubs her "toughest critic."

Next, she'd select Johnny Cash, because she's a big fan and feels like she was born in the wrong era. Last but not least, she would pick English cook Nigella Lawson because they have similar food philosophies.

Make it your own

"My biggest tip to anyone when it comes to cooking is to not be afraid to put your own spin on it," Vitale says. "I want people to feel liberated, not like they're bound to a recipe or that it won't taste right if they don't do it exactly as written."

She shares her broccoli rabe, sausage, and pesto pasta recipe with us, saying, "You will go crazy over this pasta dish because it's insanely easy. … My mouth salivates just thinking about it." You can even swap in kale or spinach, if you prefer; the options are endless. "Add different veggies, different herbs, and before you know it, you put a stamp on a brand-new recipe and you'll make it completely your own."

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A freewheeling chat with Billy Bob Thornton

The Oscar nominee talks about "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot," but also TV, "Bad Santa 2" and "The Searchers."

MATT PRIGGE
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Billy Bob Thornton plays an ornery general dealing with Tina Fey's war correspondent in "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot." PARAMOUNT PICTURES

"I'm a stream of consciousness guy," Billy Bob Thornton tells us. We're talking about "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot," the new war dramedy starring Tina Fey as a correspondent in Afghanistan, featuring the Oscar-nominated actor, 60, in a small part as an ornery general. But the conversation drifts all over the place — from his experiences with TV thanks to "Fargo" to the sequel to "Bad Santa," which he was just shooting in Montreal, to his dislike of John Ford's classic Western "The Searchers." Here's the highlights:

On Tina Fey's funny but realistic performance in "Whiskey":
"Tina didn't telegraph her emotions. She just let it happen. She didn't overdo it, which some people tend to do. I call it 'The Actor Face.' The 'Actor Face' is usually on the posters. It's this slightly bewildered and horrified look. We don't usually do those in the movies. That face is just for the poster."

His beef with movies today (or one of them):
"These days dramas are over-earnest. Every moment is like a soap opera. And comedies don't have heart. They just make them broad and funny to appeal to a broad audience. I love the mixture of drama and humor in movies."

What to expect from "Bad Santa 2":
Some of the nasty stuff is even nastier, but this one has more heart — even compared to the heart of the first one, which did have a beating heart. It goes to both extremes a little more. We have a couple scenes that you could put in 'On the Waterfront.'"

Wanting to do more TV after "Fargo":
"TV is where I go to get my fix that's replacing what I used to be able to do. I came up in the heyday of independent film. Now premium cable networks have taken over what independent film was for a lot of us. Actors are clamoring to get on TV now. I'm absolutely planning to do more. I've even toyed with creating a show, not necessarily for myself but as a writer-creator."

Disliking John Ford's "The Searchers":
"The story is wonderful. What I didn't like was how uneven it was. You had some performances [like John Wayne's] that were actually grounded and really good. Then there were others that were so over-the-top it was like they were in a Yosemite Sam cartoon. But I find that in John Ford movies in general: There's always an unevenness in the acting. This is an example of where mixing drama and comedy didn't work, because they could become goofy. You'd have a Vaudeville moment then an Elia Kazan moment. You don't want to spread them that far apart.

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"CROUCHING, TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON: SWORD OF DESTINY"

Michelle Yeoh and Donnie Yen share a moment in the belated sequel to "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." NETFLIX

When it came out 16 years ago, Ang Lee's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" was no mere martial arts film. It was for Westerners whose knowledge of Hong Kong/Chinese action cinema were limited to Jackie Chan. It was grand and lyrical, where its belated sequel is a straight-up, junky, more or less an anonymous ass-kicker — closer to a knockoff than a continuation. That's not a bad thing. Quick and slight, it also delivers the goods, early and often. With lowered expectations it's still a delight, despite some shoddy CGI and a script that introduces a deeply melancholic arc for Michelle Yeoh's character then forgets about it.

"THE LOOK OF SILENCE"

Joshua Oppenheimer's "The Look of Silence" follows Adi Rukun, the brother of a man murdered during the Indonesian genocide of the 1960s. DRAFTHOUSE FILMS

Two years ago the Oscars failed to hand the Best Documentary trophy to "The Act of Killing," Joshua Oppenheimer's brazen and hugely important film about the Indonesian genocide of the 1960s, whose perpetrators were not only not punished but treated like national celebrities. And then the Academy did the same to his followup, which returns to the subject but with a more sober tone. "The Look of Silence" follows the brother of a victim who confronts numerous perpetrators, forcing them to acknowledge — though often not — they helped in the killing of maybe a million innocent people. We tend to think of evil as a disease whose infectees must be stamped out like roaches. Oppenheimer's films argue that what's truly useful is understanding them.

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Teen angst and loud tunes

Emma Goidel's new play brings youth rebellion and rock star dreams to the Azuka Theatre.

A. D. AMOROSI
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Mary Tuomanen plays Riley in "Local Girls." JOHANNA AUSTIN

With "Local Girls", buzzy Philly playwright Emma Goidel moves up the local theater ladder with her second staged work this season (the first, the acclaimed "A Knee That Can Bend" premiered in December 2015).

Though a loud, raucous work of elegantly poetic and absurdist fiction, "Local Girls" — about the friendship between a high school metal rocker and a chemistry nerd — stems from Goidel's own experience.

"I did grow up amidst rock musicians at an arts school in Atlanta with parents who walked away from music careers," says Goidel. "All of the people I made up to populate the world of "Local Girls" are inspired by my childhood."

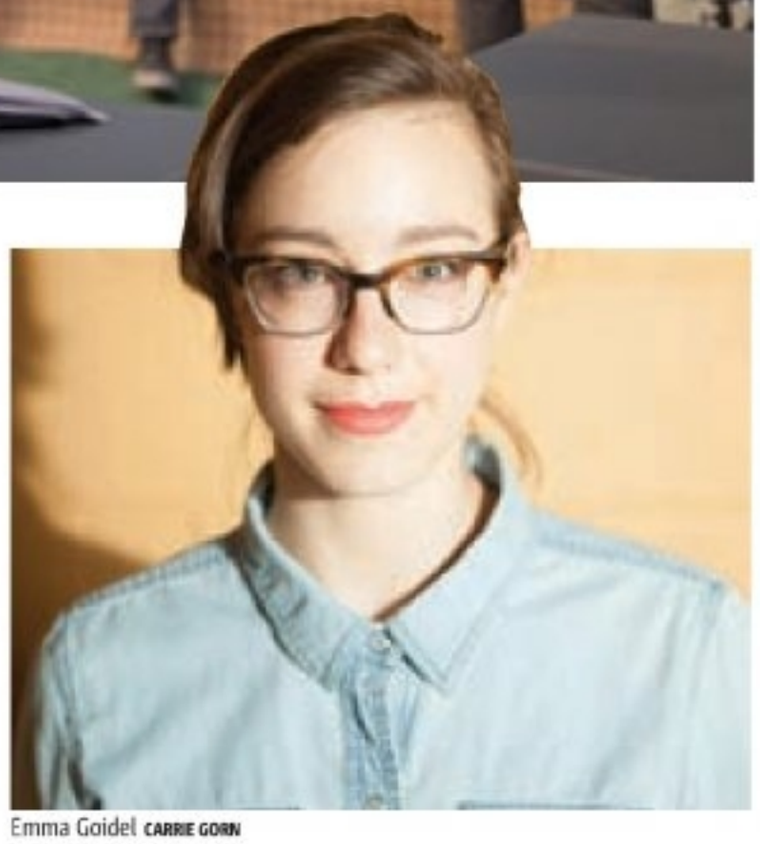
And now it's "Local Girls" that's inspiring the 26-year-old to get back to her childhood passion. Goidel recently picked up her guitar and joined Bandits, a feminist punk band, with "Local Girls'" co-star Mary Tuomanen.

How did you choose your soundtrack for "Local Girls"?

I grew up with friends who were super-into metal, and when I sat down to write a new play, that's where I headed. I am interested in people who love metal, and I find imaging and writing about them satisfying.

You recently joined a band with Mary Tuomanen.

Being in the "Local Girls" world brings up for me the massive love I had for making music and playing guitar in middle school and early high school. I stopped playing guitar in college, and being in rehearsal for "Local Girls," combined with joining the Bandits for a gig at the end of January, definitely made me want to play again, which I did, and am doing now.



Emma Goidel CARRIE GORN

You've had two major works premiere this season. How important is that to a playwright?

It's pretty freaking fantastic. My work as a playwright doesn't stop when I write "end of play" on the third draft. Learning about and rewriting the play in the rehearsal room, and then, seeing what happens to my carefully laid plans when they go up for an audience is massively important for me as a growing writer, and for the play as a live text intended for production. Having two back-to-back opportunities to do that work has been inspiring, hugely informative, and so necessary. How else can you learn how to make theater that is meaningful for an audience? You have to put it up for an audience, and see what it does for them.

If you go

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The job hunt just got easier for college graduates

Take notes from these experts on nailing down employment.

AMANDA PEREZ
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Securing employment is one of the most stressful parts of graduating from college — but it doesn't have to be. The National Center for Education Statistics puts the employment rate for young graduates at 69 percent.

These tips can help recent grads put their degree to work.

Ask questions during interviews: Expressing enthusiasm during a job interview shows employers that you're interested in more than just the position. It shows you're also interested in the company as a whole, and where you fit in it. Questions impress a potential employer, and they help you. An interview is as much a chance for you to interview them, and find out if the company is a place you can see yourself building a long-term career. Automotive entrepreneur Dave Cantin's advice to new grads? "Be curious" and "ask as many questions as you can."

Seize every opportunity: In the words of the Rolling Stones, you can't always get what you want. Only 51 percent of graduates said their job was related to their college major, according to a 2014 Careerbuilder survey. The reality is, every opportunity won't be your No. 1 choice, but every opportunity is a learning experience.

Can't get a job right away? "Join professional organizations," suggests Helene Cruz, director of career counseling at Pace University.

Don't let lack of experience stop you: Sometimes, a thin resume may stop recent grads from even applying to jobs of interest, but it shouldn't, says Cantin. "Just because someone interned in that position doesn't mean they're better or have better qualities in that position over somebody that hasn't done it yet. It just means that somebody has more experience." Show employers that you have the skills and the personality to work efficiently in the workplace.

Turn that internship into full-time work: Universities are constantly stressing the importance of interning throughout your academic career. Not only does an internship under your belt make you a competitive job candidate, it could also open up doors for you within the company, Cantin says: "The best advice I could give to somebody while they're interning is to stress your ability so that your manager knows that you are interested in a full-time position."

Even if you don't get a job, stay in touch with your bosses. Says Cruz, "LinkedIn is a great tool. Every now and then drop somebody a line."

Take advantage of alumni career services: Career services can be a huge help for recent graduates looking for employment. Career counselors have the resources to tap into alumni networks, and they receive job offers daily for students and alumni. "Our advice: Start early," Cruz says.

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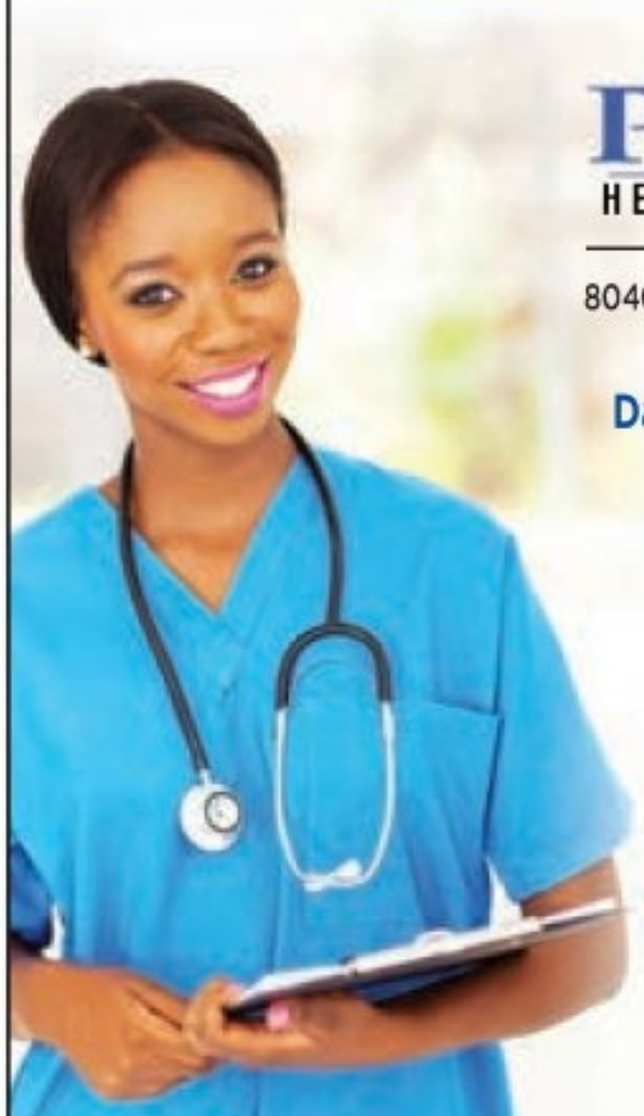

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All the feels

These Lady Bosses bust the myth that women are "too emotional" at work.

ALIZAH SALARIO
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ISTOCK

Female bosses struggle against the stereotype that women can't be both competent and likable. Finding support can be hard, particularly in creative fields.

Enter Lady Boss, a New York-based initiative that offers tools, resources and events to help women in creative fields "kick more ass in work and life."

At a recent Lady Boss event, founder/director Tracy Candido, Kat Kinsman, editor-at-large of Tasting Table and the author of the forthcoming book "Hi, Anxiety" and Elizabeth Valleau, a creative director, entrepreneur and musician known for her projects Empire Mayonnaise and the art collective WOLVVES, offered their best advice for bosses and dealing with emotions in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence vs. emotional honesty

Being a boss requires being accountable to others, says Valleau. Freaking out can shake the faith of people depending on you, but that doesn't mean striving to be an emotionless automaton, either.

"I personally do my best work when I can be a human," says Kinsman. "Going into a place where you feel like people are on the same kind of path, where you don't feel like you have to apologize for yourself whatsoever is a huge thing."

"There's emotional intelligence and emotional honesty," adds Valleau. "The stereotype that women are overly emotional is one of the tools that's used to keep us from places of power, and places of creativity," says Valleau. She suggests "dealing with the stereotype head on, and using it as a teachable moment to show that emotions aren't bad. What's bad is using them in a manipulative way or in a vulnerable way that's not appropriate in the workplace."

Find your inner frat boy

Ambitious women are often taught to downplay their desires, and as a result, says Valleau,"there's very few professional resources for young women who specifically want to be the boss ... even if we haven't made it yet, the desire to be really awesome seems unladylike somehow." Kinsman's strategy? "I do a little exercise where I tell myself, channel your inner frat boy — mine's name is Chet — and I think, what would Chet do? Channel that kind of confidence, and don't apologize for having desires and wants."

Be OK with not being OK

When emotions do run high in a professional situation, don't beat yourself up. Instead, take a beat. "You might be trying to not explode, but they [other employees] might see you as poised," says Kinsman. "You can always go and bury your face in your dog or your partner later."

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Nova turns page to postseason, hopes to buck trends

Can the Wildcats avoid yet another early exit?

JON MARKS
@MetroPhilly
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As he walked off the Wells Fargo Center court to a standing ovation with 40.9 seconds left and his team holding a commanding 16-point lead, Ryan Arcidiacono insists he didn't have the same thought running through his mind as every other Villanova fan in the building.

Will he be back?

With the NCAA East Regionals taking place in that very arena from March 25-27, it's not much of a stretch to imagine the 27-4 Wildcats returning to their home away from home for the Sweet 16. But first, Nova has to take care of business in the early rounds to get there, something they've failed to do in the one-and-done postseason.

That why Arcidiacono wouldn't allow himself to look that far ahead, after scoring 16 points and handing out five assists, as the Cats handled Georgetown, 84-71, in what will likely be a preview of their Big East Tournament opening game Thursday. His mantra has always been, "One day at a time. One game at a time."

So he's not about to change now.

"I'll tell the guys what we tell them all year," Arcidiacono said. "It's prepare for one day at a time. One game at a time. If we try to do anything special because it's the Big East Tournament or the NCAA Tournament everybody would be messed up."

The microscope will be on the No. 3 ranked Wildcats once the Big Dance gets underway. With Villanova expected to be at worst a No. 2 seed — and likely a No. 1 in the East — two wins would get them back to the Wells Fargo Center.

As nice as that sounds, Wright and Co. won't be so presumptuous.

"That's not at all easy to envision," said Wright, who praised seniors Arcidiacono and Daniel Ochefu, who've compiled a 109-26 career record. "I'm sure there have to be a lot of things to happen for us to be seeded like that and we have to win games. So we don't think about that yet. When we evaluate our program our evaluation process is based on what we do in the regular season. This is just tournament time. You've got to go lay it all out there and have fun with it. But these are what you get evaluated on. We know it.

Especially if they can get over what's become as much of a mental than physical hurdle in the second round and punch their ticket to the Sweet 16. Since making it to the Final Four in 2009 Villanova hasn't made it out of the first weekend in five tries, twice losing as a No. 2 seed (to Saint Mary's in 2010 and to 2014 champ UConn), before tumbling to North Carolina State as a No. 1 last year.

Until they get over that hump, it will be the only thing anyone talks about — and they know it. But Wright wants his team to embrace that reality rather than shrink from it. They know what's at stake, and can't wait for the fun to begin.

And they also know if three weeks from now they're right back here for the Sweet 16, this already memorable season might turn into something really special.

The Wildcats will likely face Georgetown (again) Thursday at noon in the Big East Tournament. GETTY IMAGES

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5 Free agents the Eagles should spend money on this week

The Eagles have an abundance of cap room and will likely add a few pieces when free agency starts this week.

LUKE MILLER
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Unlike 2015, the Eagles don't have the ability or desire to be the team making the most headlines in free agency. They do have roughly $17 million in cap space left to allocate though, and some players out there are worth spending it on. Here's a rundown on five of them.

Anquan Boldin, WR, SF 49ers

The 2015 NFL Man of the Year award winner would bring some much-needed experience to the Eagles' receiving corps. He has seven career 1,000-yard seasons, which is seven more than the receivers currently on the Birds' roster combined.

The Eagles don't have the cap space to get involved in a bidding war for the 35-year-old, but if they desire to get a little veteran presence at wide receiver, Boldin provides much more production than previous attempts like Miles Austin, or the possible return of Jason Avant. The franchise probably wouldn't mind stealing a bit of talent from Chip Kelly, either.

Jeff Allen, G, Kansas City Chiefs

On the list of Chiefs' players possibly following Doug Pederson to Philadelphia, Allen would be the most useful. While the Eagles' biggest concerns are at guard, they could use help everywhere along the offensive line, and Allen has shown the ability to play both tackle spots in the past.

The Chiefs have a lot of free agents to take care of, having already used their franchise tag on safety Eric Berry. Allen is one who could likely be pried away and serve as an instant upgrade over either guard spot in Philly. Bringing in at least one guard through free agency lets the Eagles be more flexible in the draft, particularly in the higher rounds, and might help keep them from reaching for a player.

A veteran wide receiver like Anquan Boldin could be a great fit for Philly. GETTY IMAGES

George Iloka, S, Cincinnati Bengals

Iloka is one of two Bengals safeties hitting free-agency. The other, Reggie Nelson, captured a lot of attention in 2015, and a lot of passes, with eight interceptions. But Nelson is 33, and the Eagles will probably prefer to target his younger (26) playing partner. At 6-foot-4, 225 pounds, Iloka is an imposing figure over the middle of the field. He started 44 games over the past three seasons for Cincinnati, and has five interceptions and two forced fumbles over that time frame.

As the Eagles transition back to a more traditional use of at least one safety in the box, Iloka would make a good pairing with Malcolm Jenkins, freeing Jenkins to play overtop or latch onto the slot receiver in coverage. They will need a starter if Walter Thurmond leaves, as all indications seem to point to.

Iloka is a player who should be entering his prime, and there could be a lot of teams competing for a signature, teams that have a lot more cap room than Philadelphia. His youth would allow them to work out a long-term deal though, and Howie Roseman may be able to craft one that is pretty cap-friendly in 2016.

Nick Fairley, DT, Los Angeles Rams

As the Eagles change back out of their 3-4 scheme toward a 4-3 defense, a lot of players in the front seven will be sliding into new roles, some familiar, some not. Fairley would provide depth on the inside, something the Eagles haven't had very much of the past few years. He also recorded 11.5 sacks over a two-year period in 2012 and 2013, while Jim Schwartz was his head coach.

Fairley moved to St. Louis last season on a one-year deal, after missing eight games in 2014. He was stepping into a crowded line situation, and didn't leave a particular mark, racking up 29 tackles and half of a sack. If he moves on, it could be on another short deal that doesn't break the bank. That has to be the kind of deal the Eagles are looking for this offseason.

Stephen Tulloch, ILB, Detroit Lions

With Kiko Alonso, Jordan Hicks and Mychal Kendricks all at least possibilities between inside and outside linebacker, there isn't much need or room for the Eagles to go pursuing big free agent targets. But the release of DeMeco Ryans does create a veteran void on defense.

Like Fairley, Tulloch's best days in Detroit were under Jim Schwartz. In three seasons playing for the Eagles' new defensive coordinator, Tulloch had 358 tackles. In 2014, he missed 13 games with an ACL tear, but returned to make 107 tackles in 2015.

If Tulloch were to sign with the Eagles, it would be in a reduced role. At 31, he is a player, much like Bolden, that the Eagles cannot afford to get in a bidding war for. But if both parties are interested, Tulloch would provide a little experience on the defense, and a lot of experience running the schemes Schwartz wants to install in Philadelphia.

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Is goalie controversy brewing between Neuvirth, Mason?

Who is the No. 1 Flyers goalie, Steve Mason or Michal Neuvirth?

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Michal Neuvirth has the fifth best save percentage in the NHL this season. GETTY IMAGES

It's hard to believe, but the Stanley Cup Playoffs begin in five weeks. The Flyers, who have 18 regular season games remaining, went into Sunday's games trailing the Penguins by three points for the final wild card spot.

They host the Lightning on Monday, which starts a grueling seven-game stretch against teams currently in a playoff position that could also define their postseason viability. If they survive and earn a playoff berth, first-year coach Dave Hakstol might be asking himself a very important question next month.

Who is his No. 1 goalie?

Steve Mason has been the answer since winning the job before the start of the 2013-14 season. However, backup Michal Neuvirth is making a case for that title after getting the call in five straight games until Mason returned between the pipes in Saturday's 6-0 laugher against the Blue Jackets.

It was the longest stretch of games Mason had gone since joining the Flyers without playing when healthy, and the two have basically split starts in the last 20 games.

"Yeah, it's not easy sitting out and we haven't had a whole lot of practice time so that in itself is a challenge to try and stay sharp," said Mason, who made 19 saves. "(Saturday night) was a pretty quiet game overall and it took a lot of getting into the rhythm of things."

Hakstol has shown a propensity of rewarding players who play well with extra ice time, and goalies are no exception. Neuvirth simply took advantage of his opportunity with stellar play when he relieved Mason after Mason left a game on Feb. 20 against the Maple Leafs with leg cramps.

This season, Neuvirth is 16-8-4 with a 2.29 goals against average and .925 save percentage while Mason, who recovered from a rocky start, owns a 14-15-7 mark, 2.62 GAA and .916 save percentage.

"[Mason] has gone out, worked hard and been a great teammate as he and [Neuvirth] have been all year," Hakstol said on Saturday. "It was a little extended over a five or six-game period without a start [for Mason], but those two guys have pushed each other and supported each other all year regardless of the circumstances. Mase worked hard while he didn't get a start and it showed tonight."

Mason, who nearly outplayed Henrik Lundqvist in a seven-game, first-round series against the Rangers in 2014, will no doubt get his opportunity to shine — but when he does he must impress.

Should he do so, and should the team sneak into the playoffs, Hakstol will likely be asking himself that very important question.

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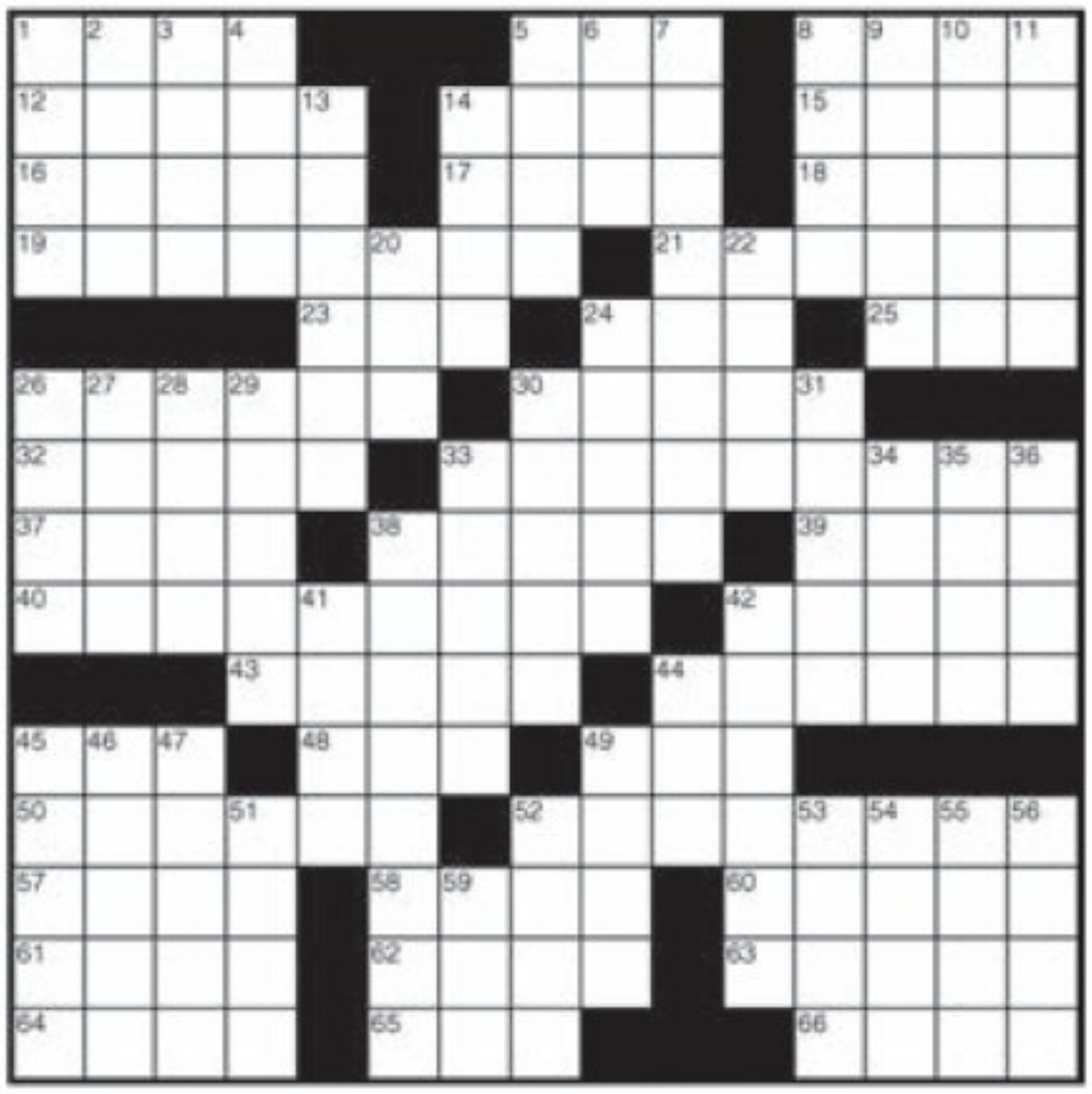

Across

1 "10-4" sayer
5 Kind of tent
8 Greenish-blue
12 Cool
14 Man of the haus
15 Out of room
16 Slowly, in music
17 Popular cookie
18 Hindu royalty
19 Shiitake, e.g.
21 Orchestra strings
23 Economic ind.
24 Contractor's figure
25 Ran into
26 Hollow reed
30 Loses color
32 On the qui vive
33 Fish talk? (2 wds.)
37 Exotic island
38 Peppermint goodies
39 Cats do it
40 Mini-planets
42 Bakery lure
43 White-water peril
44 Diminish
45 Bail out
48 Roast beef au —
49 Tractor-trailer
50 Groupie welcome
52 Blabbed (2 wds.)
57 Diamond, once
58 Ho-hum
60 Fridge maker
61 Calligraphy media
62 Ca++, for one
63 More upscale
64 Palm reader's opener (2 wds.)
65 Leo mo.
66 Like wild oats

Down

1 Reassure
2 Roquefort hue
3 Geologic time divisions
4 Portnoy's creator
5 Beauty parlor special
6 Suffix for forfeit
7 Furnishes
8 1960s hairdo
9 Second thought
10 They parallel radii
11 Elite (2 wds.)
13 Overlooked
14 Cager's target
20 Lennon's Yoko
22 Fateful day
24 Swelters
26 Rum cake
27 Anguished wail
28 Unfreeze
29 Short
30 Real bargains
31 Trains for boxing
33 Mop companions
34 Psyche's beloved
35 Crowning point
36 Kublai —
38 A Carolina capital
41 Elephant owner, maybe
42 Crete's sea
44 54, to Flavius
45 PC character code
46 Images
47 Elizabethan buccaneer
49 Bleacher shouts
51 Threat ender
52 Pack of hoodlums
53 Jacques' pals
54 Texas town
55 From the top
56 Knitter's need
59 Mr. Gehrig

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easy

5	1	9		2				
	4	6	3					1
					4			
1					5	2		
9		4	6		2	3		7
		3	4					9
			5					
2					9	5	3	
				1		4	9	8

hard

2		5		1		8		4
	1			4	3	5	2	
	3							
4				9		2		
			1		2			
		1		8				3
							7	
	6	8	2	3			9	
9		2		7		3		6

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Don't wait for someone to make the first move. Initiate change based on what you need to do in order to improve your life at home or work.

Taurus Stick to what you do best. Don't tempt fate. Abide by the rules and be aware of current trends. Share your knowledge and experience, not your cash.

Gemini Don't stop just because someone else does. Push forward until you finish what's expected of you. Your ability to influence others will lead to advancement.

Cancer Don't let someone's inconsistency ruin your day. Do your own thing and let your creative imagination be your guide. Handle responsibility your way.

Leo Spending money on items or procedures that will help you gain momentum will pay off, as long as you are responsible, shop around for the best deal and stick to a set budget.

Virgo Set the standard for the way you want to be treated, and don't let anyone get away with bullying behavior or emotional blackmail. Networking will lead to a worthwhile partnership.

Libra Making a fuss won't solve a problem. An older friend or relative will offer you something of interest. Old dreams, hopes and wishes can be revisited.

Scorpio Make changes at home that will add to your comfort and give you the freedom to experiment with an idea you want to pursue. Romance will improve an important relationship.

Sagittarius Be truthful and avoid gossip, and arguments over responsibilities. Altering your living arrangements will help ease your stress and give you the freedom to begin a new pursuit.

Capricorn Avoid making assumptions. You are best off taking your time and seeing what unfolds before you make a move. Learn from your mistakes and avoid a costly loss.

Aquarius Hide your gullibility or do enough research to know when someone is taking advantage of you. Keep your life simple and aim for self-improvement, not trying to change others.

Pisces You should try to make your idea a reality. Let your imagination take charge and lead the way. A gifted individual will want to contribute to your plan. EUGENIA LAST

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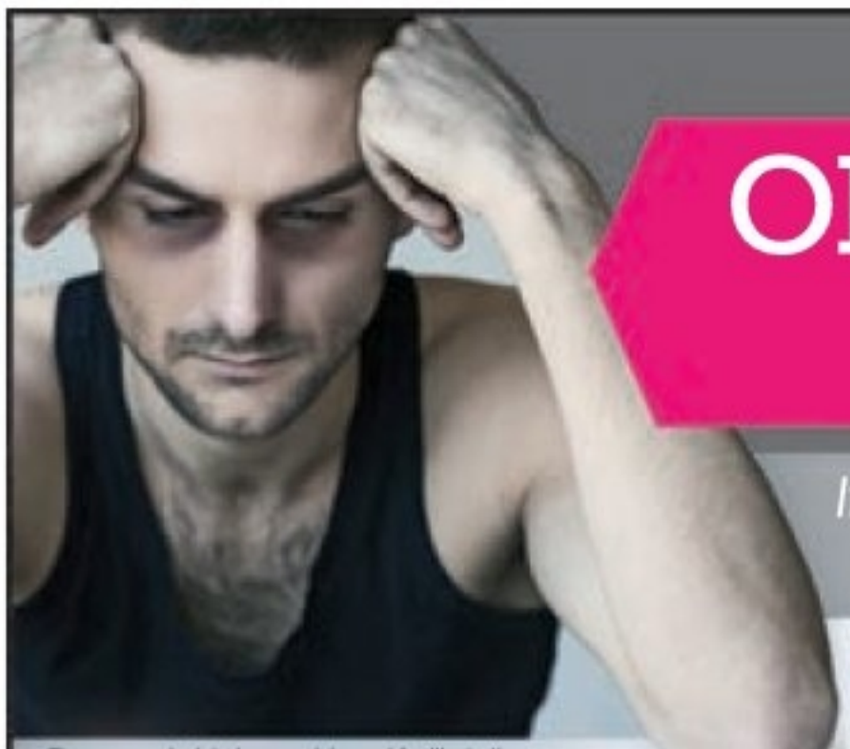

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